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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **MICHIGAN'S APPROACH TO THE PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

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The State of Michigan's two years of preparation for the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) culminated with the onsite review, which occurred during the week of September 9-13, 2002. Michigan received a courtesy copy of the final report on December 19, 2002 and the intensive work that resulted in this Program Improvement Plan (PIP) began in earnest.

The findings established in the federal review highlighted for Michigan those areas where we are successful and those where we can improve. Similar to other states, those areas where improvement is needed are among the most difficult to implement given the system wide change that must occur. It is also in these areas where Michigan has targeted our intensive efforts as outlined in this revised Program Improvement Plan.

The year 2003 was one of significant change for Michigan and for the Family Independence Agency. A new gubernatorial administration took office on January 1, 2003 and new directors for each state department were appointed. The FIA director for 2003, Nannette Bowler, brought with her a passion for children. As a result, FIA undertook a massive program review effort called Lines of Service. The premise behind the Lines of Service was to conduct an in-depth review of the Agency's programs from both an internal and external perspective with the anticipated result being the development of an enhanced model for service delivery.

In December 2003, Ms. Bowler resigned as the Director of the FIA to pursue a career in the judiciary. Michigan's Governor, Jennifer Granholm, appointed Ms. Marianne Udow as the FIA Director effective January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2004. Ms. Udow came to FIA from her position as Senior Vice President of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Michigan. Ms. Udow is listed as one of the top 100 most influential women in Michigan and brings with her an in-depth understanding of the needs of the citizens of Michigan. As her chief deputy, Ms. Udow appointed Ms. Laura Champagne. Ms. Champagne is a former FIA (then Michigan Department of Social Services) employee. Most notably, Ms. Champagne is an attorney and most recently was the Assistant Director for the United Auto Workers International (UAW). Ms. Champagne, as Chief Deputy, has become actively involved in Michigan's continuing efforts to craft our Program Improvement Plan.

Michigan was not without challenge as we undertook the effort to develop our PIP beginning in late 2002. As with other states, Michigan has a large budget deficit in this current fiscal year. This budget deficit means, for the short term, that staffing patterns within the agency will remain flat. The FIA has a young workforce and caseloads in the public assistance components of the Agency's programs are beginning to rise due to economic factors. However, we view the opportunities of this time as outweighing the challenges. We are committed to doing business in a new manner, one that is more responsive to the needs of children and families across a continuum of care and among state agencies.

Additionally, Michigan learned during our continuing efforts to develop a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) that staff resources dedicated to this effort were not adequate. During the past 4-months, Michigan has worked to develop a dedicated unit assigned to the development and

monitoring of not only the PIP and CFSR process, but more broadly as a child welfare quality assurance unit within the Agency. It is our expectation that with the creation of this unit, and the focused support from the Director and Chief Deputy, we will be better prepared to implement and monitor the strategies that are identified in our PIP.

## **Organizational Strategies**

The PIP unit, which will be called the Child Welfare Quality Assurance Unit, will be organizationally housed in Children's Services within FIA and will report directly to the manager of the Protective Services and Foster Care Division, Mary Mehren. Currently, there are two full time staff assigned to the unit. Their sole responsibilities are to develop and implement the PIP in collaboration with our other state partners and stakeholders. Additionally, the Child Welfare Quality Assurance unit is responsible for the development and implementation of the state CFSR process that will serve as one of the major methods of measuring our improvements and providing feedback to field management and staff. The interface between Field Services, the program office policy staff and the Child Welfare Quality Assurance unit must be continuous to assure the strategies articulated in the PIP are implemented and assessed.

Recent changes in Executive Management, including the appointment of Longino Gonzales as Acting Deputy for Children's Services, has resulted in an increased focus on the critical nature of the Program Improvement Plan as it relates to the quality provision of child welfare services. Mr. Gonzales is the permanent Director of Saginaw County FIA. His county was one of the field offices that underwent the onsite CFSR in 2002. Since that time, Mr. Gonzales has directed his attention and the attention of his office staff to designing operational constructs around the outcomes for the CFSR. Mr. Gonzales and his staff have developed local office templates for use as management tools that better focus attention on key issues. Mr. Gonzales describes the change necessary, not only in Saginaw but statewide, as being one of changing or moving our Agency culture in a direction that is synonymous with the CFSR outcomes. He is deeply committed to the precepts of the CFSR not because they are mandated by DHHS but because they are the right actions to achieve for child and family well-being.

Over the coming three months, June through August of 2004, Mr. Gonzales has scheduled individual meetings with many county Directors and staffs to illustrate the importance of the PIP. Mr. Gonzales is particularly focusing on those counties that underwent the CFSR in 2002. He intends to share the tools developed in Saginaw over the past 18 months and to garner the commitment of other county directors to utilize these tools or to develop a set that will work well for their local office. The message, however, is that change must occur in how child welfare services are provided in order to achieve the best outcomes for children and families. To that end, Mr. Gonzales is strongly committed the strengthening the role and staffing levels of the Child Welfare Quality Assurance Unit in the following manner.

A permanent review staff will be assigned to the unit. Initially, these staff will be the staff of the Children's Protective Services Peer Review Team. With the implementation of a state CFSR process that reviews practice across a continuum of services, the individual focus on only the CPS program is no longer necessary. These permanent quality assurance staff will partner with a rotating staff to conduct the reviews and provide feedback to the county. The rotating staff will then be able to spread their knowledge and learned best practices across the state in a much more

effective manner. The change will come from within and will be more readily accepted by relying upon this methodology for the review team composition.

The rotating staff member of the review team will be trained in the same manner as the permanent staff. Michigan is scheduling a technical assistance day with Peter Watson of the NRC for Organizational Improvement in August to conduct the initial training. It is our plan to also “train the trainer” in conjunction with Mr. Watson so we can continue to train others to rotate into the review teams quarterly.

The program analysts of the Children’s Protective Services and Children’s Foster Care policy units will be trained and will participate in CFS reviews. This will ensure that staff who write and interpret policy have opportunities to review the impact of that policy in practice. Additionally, the supervisor’s in these units will also participate in the reviews. This represents a total pool of 18 staff trained as reviewers. Additionally, it is our intent to rotate Child Welfare Institute trainers and supervisors as temporary reviewers. Again, the idea is to keep central office staff aware of and in tune with the impact of training and policy at the practice level. This would represent an additional pool of 10 staff or more.

The Outstate Operations Manager, Kathie McDonald, is strongly committed to the practices and outcomes articulated in the PIP. As such, she has dedicated Zone Services Specialists to serve as part of the rotating pool of reviewers. The Zone Services Specialists will also be trained in the first training session conducted by Mr. Watson. These staff are key to ensuring the strategies of the PIP are infused into county practice. Ms. McDonald has also designated key Central Office staff to be part of the rotating team. The eventual goal of Michigan is to train and utilize field supervisory personnel as part of the rotation as we expand the reviews to a broader number of counties.

As was earlier indicated, one of the most important concepts in effectively implementing the PIP is to assure the continuous feedback between the program office, the Child Welfare Quality Assurance Unit and the field office child welfare staff and managers. It is our belief that the organizational structure articulated above will achieve that overarching goal.

### **Process Used to Develop the CFSR Program Improvement Plan**

Federal regulations require states to develop the PIP through a joint effort between State and Federal staff in consultation with the review team. FIA recognized the need to be inclusive in the approach we took to formulating the PIP. As a result, FIA organized staff into four separate teams around the federal outcomes of Safety, Permanency, Well-Being, and one team dedicated to Data and Measurement strategies. These teams worked to develop an overarching plan that would address those areas where Michigan sought to improve. Additionally, it was Michigan’s vision that these core teams would become the catalyst for broader systemic reform as each workgroup included a variety of public and private partners.

These four teams worked to identify the factors that may have contributed to the level of performance as assessed by the federal CFSR; identify strategies that could positively impact these underlying conditions, and to suggest how to measure the strategies they developed to address the contributing factors. For Michigan, the area that we struggled most with, and continue to struggle with, is the measurement component. Several telephonic technical assistance calls were made with the NRC for Organizational Improvement in an effort to focus

our efforts on the development of data measures that would be attainable, sustainable and within our current structure to obtain. While great strides have been achieved, this continues to be one of our greatest areas of challenge.

In development of this PIP, Michigan learned valuable lessons relative to creating a document that creates a statewide vision for child welfare service delivery. Since our efforts of 2003, we learned the necessity to create a Management Team that has direct oversight of the PIP. Secondly, we learned that we must have staff, the PIP Unit, dedicated to the design and implementation of the PIP. Their role and function is to serve in an advisory capacity and review data to measure the progress toward the desired outcomes and to recommend modifications of the PIP based on their involvement. Finally, we will have the review teams that perform the on-site reviews, provide feedback on performance to counties and liaison with the PIP unit to ensure there is a focus on continuous quality improvement in the delivery of child welfare services.

### **Strategies and Action Steps for Measuring Performance and Assessing Progress**

Michigan has struggled over the past year with developing adequate measurement methodologies. More than any other factor, determining how we will measure our progress has resulted in the delay of an approval of our Program Improvement Plan. However, we believe we have resolved many of our outstanding issues and that the measurement strategies articulated below will provide Michigan with a way to measure the improvements we will be implementing over the coming 2-years. Additionally, the organizational changes in the development of a PIP unit, and the expansion of the Peer Review Process to include Foster Care (as well as the Adoption and Juvenile Justice programs) will enable Michigan to continue our improvement strategy in child welfare. This process will provide us with the ability to review and sustain the improvements we are making as a result of our PIP goals.

For those outcomes in the CFSR with data indicators where national standards are assigned, Michigan is required, as are other states, to meet the national standard for the statewide data indicator. During the CFSR reviews, ACF utilized six national standards as part of this process: recurrence of maltreatment; incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care; foster care re-entries; stability of foster care placements; length of time to achieve reunification; and length of time to achieve adoption.

### **Data Sources**

Three primary data sources will be used for performance monitoring and measurement: the FIA Data Warehouse, state conducted CFS reviews that include both a case record review and stakeholder interviews, and a self assessment component utilizing supervisory case reads. The CFS reviews will utilize an instrument that closely replicates the federal review instrument with state specific policy citations and licensing regulations included. This instrument is currently being developed for use in the CFS review process that Michigan will implement over the coming 3-months.

These data strategies will enable Michigan to accomplish the following: Establish baseline data in areas where we currently do not have performance achievement calculated into a percentage (or baseline). Analyze the differences in achieving outcomes across the state's 83 counties. Monitor performance on a statewide level, by specific counties and eventually, to the worker level. Monitor and report on the performance of our Private Child Placing Agency partners; and

finally, assist us in targeting training and technical assistance to those areas that are not performing well or that show declines in performance. Additionally, we anticipate that the data strategies we will use to utilize will enable us to move more expeditiously into statewide utilization of the Family to Family model that we have been piloting for the past 2-years. The data sets developed to support the Family to Family initiatives provide a richer data set than what we have previously utilized. As we continue to modify our SACWIS system; become more reliant upon Data Warehouse reporting and engage in a continuous quality process, Michigan will, within the coming 2 years, be able to provide case level data, or “drill improvement” data to the customer level.

## **Data Warehouse**

Currently, the Data Warehouse collects a full data set from the Service Worker Support System (SWSS) in the program areas of Foster Care, Adoption and Juvenile Justice (FAJ). The SWSS Children’s Protective Services (CPS) component is currently under development with a targeted implementation date of September 2005. CPS data is currently available on a limited basis as each of Michigan’s 83 counties collect data and report utilizing an automated system that does not feed into the Data Warehouse. Michigan is currently developing a report format for CPS data that will enable local offices to more easily track performance. The report will become an automated production report that will be available to counties monthly utilizing Web I technology (Web Information).

Through our planning for the CFS review process, Michigan realized the need to automate supervisory case read data in a centralized manner. Currently, supervisors perform a minimum of 3 case reviews per worker per month but there is no centralized manner in which to collect the data from the case reviews. Additionally, we don’t have a method of providing feedback to supervisors on their county’s performance compared to other counties in the state. Michigan’s current inability to “roll up” the data on a statewide basis has been one of the barriers faced in the development of an adequate measurement strategy for PIP reporting. The FIA has made the determination to devote resources to the development of an automated system that will enable the roll up of the data gathered during supervisory case reading and then provide the reports back to the local offices. This is one of our strategies that is overarching in both the CFS reviews and the continued development of Data Warehouse reporting.

Finally, the use of the data elements in the Data Warehouse continues to be developed for use in Michigan’s pilots for the Family to Family (F2F) sites. The data elements that are used to implement the F2F strategies focus on neighborhoods for recruitment and retention of foster families; that rely upon neighborhood schools and service agencies and closely target geographic areas to learn what barriers exist to achieving permanency and stability. Michigan has committed to a full, statewide roll out of F2F by 2007 as one of our primary child welfare strategies. Therefore, as F2F expands, so will the development of reports that “drill down” to the child, family and neighborhood level. These will enable Michigan to eventually report on performance in very specific detail.

## **CFS Review Methodology (Case Record Reviews and Stakeholder Interviews)**

Michigan has determined that we will closely replicate the CFS Review as a means of measuring progress. During the months of May through the end of July, we will be working to refine our internal processes so we are ready to conduct the first series of reviews commencing in August

of 04. As earlier indicated, Michigan utilized 2-days of our on-site TA with Peter Watson to assist us in developing our state conducted CFSR process. During those two days, we learned that some of the action steps we had planned would not achieve our overall goal in the creation of a comprehensive CFSR replicate program in Michigan. Additionally, Mr. Watson assisted us in clarifying the scope of our CFSR's and will continue to provide technical assistance as we complete our planning.

Specifically, Mr. Watson will provide training for our review team as described in the Organizational Strategies section of this document (page 3). Additionally, Mr. Watson will assist in the first review acting as a team leader in order to demonstrate that role and its function.

Michigan will utilize the 2002 Federal CFSR findings as baseline data. It is our expectation that during the first two years of the process, Michigan will conduct CFS reviews in the five largest counties; Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Saginaw and Genesee. We will utilize the federal review tool and will incorporate interviews into the process. These 5-largest counties account for 75% of the child welfare cases in the State. Therefore, the findings that Michigan develops from the CFS reviews will be representative of child welfare performance statewide.

In the August review, since it will be the first review that we perform, we will not be providing percentages of improvement as part of our initial Quarterly Report. However, it is our intention to report on our success in implementing the review process and the further steps we will take to fully implement a statewide system of reviews. Over the next quarter, which would be September through December, we will again conduct a review, without the assistance of Mr. Watson. For our second quarterly report, we anticipate finalizing the methodology utilized in the reviews and having refined the process internally. For our third quarterly report, we anticipate reporting findings from our CFSR process to measure progress.

During these first 2 quarterly review cycles, we anticipate we will be achieving the following steps:

- Building capacity by training additional staff for the review team
- Implementing a data reporting format that synthesizes the data from the on-site reviews into a user friendly report. We anticipate further technical assistance on this component from Mr. Watson.
- Determining the number of cases that will be read each quarter and scheduling the review cycle beginning in January 2005.
- Establishing a format for training and technical assistance to the counties that have been reviewed that includes the following:
  - Provide the results of their CFS review
  - Meet with the managers and staff to discuss areas that are either high or low for the purpose of reinforcing best practice and for providing technical assistance in the areas where improvement is needed
  - Coordinate with the county in the areas they need additional training to ensure compliance
  - Assist in implementation of strategies included in the PIP
- Determining the procedures, if any, to monitor performance in those counties that had been reviewed separately from the on-going CFS process.
- Determining an additional number and pool of county offices that will be reviewed and rotating them into the schedule.

As Michigan builds capacity for the permanent review process by adding team members, it is our expectation that we will begin to review more cases in a more frequent manner. We are not prepared at this point to specify the number of cases that will be read. Those details will be reported in our second quarterly update in December 2004. However, we are committed to reviewing a minimum of 30 cases per quarter, or 120 annually. As we build capacity, we anticipate this number will rise.

At this time, one reason we are not prepared to identify the number of reviews per quarter is that once the Child Welfare Quality Assurance Unit is completely formed and implemented, (June 2004) we will need to provide intensive training not only to the unit's permanent staff but to those other adjunct reviewers who will partner with the unit to conduct the reviews. Once the staff is trained, there remains a learning curve regarding developing expertise in conducting the reviews. It is our plan that we will begin a continuous process of reviews but will not be able to reach our capacity to do so until approximately one year into our PIP. Until that time, however, we believe our strategies provide us with an adequate number of cases from which to draw conclusions about practice in the state.

One key part of our strategy on the CFS Reviews is involvement at the local county office level. As we build capacity over the 2-years of the PIP, we will involve many more county managers as part of a pool of trained reviewers. With the addition of counties and staff, we contend the learning process around the CFSR Outcomes and the best practice component will increase compliance to our overall PIP strategy. It must be underscored that this plan is a long-term commitment on the part of Michigan to institute a Child Welfare Quality Assurance Process that is sustainable over a number of years.

Michigan recognizes that the development of our Program Improvement Plan was delayed during 2003 based on the challenges we experienced. Additionally, we recognize that the strategies we have articulated above further delay the implementation of our reporting processes by an additional 3-months. However, it is our contention that the additional 3-months will enable us to complete the development of a case review process and refine our data strategies, including the development of baseline data. We will be working closely with the NRC for Organizational Improvement and will be able to report in June on the progress achieved as a result of the approval of the PIP. The organizational changes FIA recently made recognize the importance of the PIP and the CFSR process and will enable us to sustain the improvements we are striving for along with being able to measure and report on those goals.

## **Self Assessment**

The continued automation of supervisory case reading documents is an important component of our self-assessment strategy and the development of data. However, those strategies apply only to the state-supervised foster care, adoption and juvenile justice cases. Therefore, to ensure that our private partners are fully engaged in the process of improving outcomes for children and families, a self-assessment component will be added for use with the private agencies. Currently, the FIA Purchased Care Division conducts reviews of contract agencies. They



provide reports to the contract agencies on compliance with state policy and on achievement of specific outcomes. They also provide technical assistance where necessary. Implementing a self-assessment utilizing the same tool that will be used by the PIP unit with the private providers will enable Michigan to measure and monitor performance for the outcome areas, as well as assessing the need for additional training and technical assistance. This is especially important where data is not available from the Data Warehouse. Additionally, the self assessment will heighten the private agencies awareness of and compliance with the federal outcomes and will make them a full partner in the provision of services and the systemic reform that Michigan strives to make as a result of the CFSR process.

### **Technical Assistance Plan**

Over the past 15 months, Michigan utilized the NRC for Organizational Improvement sporadically and only by telephone. In the coming months, it is our priority to arrange for an on-site visit with Peter Watson and to fully engage him in the finalization of the state CFSR process and our data strategies. The phone TA has been beneficial to Michigan, as has been the on-site visit and phone TA provided to Michigan by Region V. However, because of our desire to fully implement a comprehensive strategy in a short period of time, Michigan has made the request for on-site TA through Region V. We anticipate that a maximum of 3-days on-site within year one of our approved PIP would be sufficient with continuing email and telephone TA as necessary. We have learned a great deal from our discussion with other states and intend to rely upon the NRC's to move Michigan quickly forward.

Michigan has been a leader in the area of effective community based programs such as Families First, Family Group Decision Making, Wraparound and the Annie E. Casey Family to Family model. Our huge geographic area with service availability inequities also presents a challenge in effecting positive improvement in several PIP areas. As such, our second on-site TA request is for the NRC for Family Centered Practice. We want to work effectively to develop a Family Centered System irrespective of geographic location.

Because of the effective partnership developed with the State Court Administrative Office and because of the commitment of the Chief Justice Maura Corrigan to children's issues in the state, Michigan has a great opportunity to develop a ground breaking partnership with our family courts. In many ways, we have already done so. For instance, Michigan has a Substance Abuse in Child Welfare project implemented where we are piloting drug courts. We have partnerships with courts for enhanced state reimbursement for children at risk of residential treatment if they are kept in the community utilizing state and local funds. Such innovative programs enable Michigan to work more effectively with our judiciary to ensure children are first and foremost protected from abuse and achieve permanency in a timely manner. We wish to fully develop this key relationship and believe TA from the NRC for Legal and Judicial Issues would be beneficial. As such, we are requesting 2 technical assistance days within the second 6-months of our approved PIP (June-December 2004).

Finally, for the first 2-years of the PIP, we are engaging in relationships with the Department of Community Health in the area of mental health services. We have participated in a teleconference on Cross System Collaboration in the Child and Family Services Review Process and will participate in Building Community-Based Mental Health Services to prevent unnecessary relinquishment of parental custody and the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health Cross-System Implications. The American Public Human Services Association, National Association of State Mental Health Directors and National TA Center for Children's Mental Health Georgetown University present these teleconferences. It is our expectation that these TA calls are the beginning of establishing a closer partnership with our state mental health agency to encourage the design and provision of services that target the needs of the child welfare population.

In the coming weeks, Michigan will formalize requests for on-site technical assistance. The TA will be a critical component of improving our system and utilizing the knowledge and practices from states that have gone before us in the CFSR process. Michigan has a history of innovative thinking in the child welfare arena. While the past year has provided many challenges, we are confident that with our current administration, we will be able to move forward again and the benefits of the TA will enable us to do so rapidly.

## **MICHIGAN'S PIP LAYOUT**

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Michigan's PIP is patterned on the recommendations of ACF and other states that have an approved PIP. We believe the model is one that is easily followed and can be updated to provide an incremental picture of our movement toward achieving the goals we have established.

The PIP is a combination of a narrative and a Matrix. The PIP Matrix is the visual representation of Michigan's plan and the accompanying narrative addresses each item or data indicator where performance did not achieve federal standards. The narrative further establishes what factors contributed to the non-conformity and outlines the improvement plan consisting of action steps inclusive of the steps that will be taken to achieve the goal and benchmarks.

Proposed methods of measuring improvement are provided for each action step. In developing these methods, great consideration was given to the state's ability to achieve measurable results and the state's existing data capabilities to assure accurate reporting. Finally, specific departmental divisions or partner agencies are identified as being responsible for each area of improvement. In this manner, FIA is able to build on and reinforce the collaborative and cross-system nature of the PIP.

Michigan's plan indicates specific percentage points for measurements that are incremental targets for improvements over the coming months. For each outcome, item and national data standard where the state was found to not be in conformity, key factors were selected that contributed to the findings and reachable goals were established.

## **SAFETY OUTCOME S1: CHILDREN ARE, FIRST AND FOREMOST, PROTECTED FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

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### ***ITEM 1: TIMELINESS OF INITIATING INVESTIGATIONS OF REPORTS OF CHILD MALTREATMENT***

#### **A. Findings Leading to Nonconformity**

- This item was applicable to 28 of the 49 cases reviewed and was rated a strength in 75% of the applicable cases. Seven cases were rated as an area needing improvement.
- In all seven of the cases rated as an area needing improvement, it was noted that investigations began in a timely manner, but face-to-face contact with child victims, caretakers, or perpetrators did not occur in accordance to agency policy.
- The Final Report cited the Statewide Assessment regarding the CPS workload study, which indicated that the number of CPS staff was not adequate and that although there had been an increase in CPS staff, it had not kept pace with the number of investigations and open for service cases. A final report cited that the CPS staff was not adequate in keeping up with the number of investigations and open services cases, although they were provided with additional staff. A statewide assessment outlining the CPS workload study was responsible for the findings.

#### **B. Improvement Plan**

Although Michigan has specific policy pertaining to commencement of an investigation and face-to-face contacts based on SDM (Structured Decision Making) priority responses and agency professional standards, there is a recognized need for closer monitoring of compliance, clarification of policy and additional training for CPS staff. Unlike Foster Care policy, in CPS, the worker is not required to address the top three identified needs from the family assessment.

In order to improve Michigan's performance regarding the timeliness of initiating investigations, the following actions will be taken:

- Management oversight of worker performance will be extended to the priority response criteria with CPS complaint investigations. This oversight should improve worker adherence to the policy on face-to-face contacts. Reports will be obtained from hand-counting specified data during supervisory case readings. The supervisory case reading form will be revised within the next six months to include separate fields for face-to-face contacts, commencement of an investigation and granted exceptions made within accepted timeframes. The unit and supervisory adherence to policy will be monitored on a Quarterly basis and will be reported from the local office to the zone office and then to the program office on a quarterly basis. Performance will be monitored and tracked by the PIP unit and technical assistance will be provided to local offices who show a decline in their adherence to policy or to those that remain below applicable standards. Workers failing to fulfill this policy requirement will be handled via progressive discipline as with any performance failure.

- Supervisors are mandated to read three cases per worker per quarter. The CPS Peer Review tools were revised to incorporate CFSR standards in January 2004. The revised tools include the CFSR safety outcome item on timeliness of initiating CPS investigations, specifically face-to-face contact with the child named in the complaint. A team of management employees are reviewing and developing a case reading tool that incorporates the outcome standards of the CFSR for both CPS and foster care. This tool revision/development will be completed in March 2004. It will be field tested in 4/2004 and 5/2004. Post field testing action steps will be determined based on the results. Data from the tool will be input into spreadsheets and used to monitor and track performance. Results will be shared with the local office as part of their management reporting system. Baselines will be those reported in the CFSR review conducted in 2002.
- The CPS Supervisory case reading forms were replaced with the new Peer Review form in October 2003. The new forms measure face-to-face contacts separate from commencement of investigation to allow for better monitoring of face-to face contacts. Although this is included in the first step, the actual revision of the form is a separate action step from the management oversight. The PS-004 will be utilized and the PIP unit will monitor performance. Baselines will be those from the 2002 CFSR. Additionally, 3 supervisory case reads per worker per quarter will be used to assure there is continuity between the PS-004 and practice as well as to determine if there are specific areas where non-compliance to policy needs to be addressed.
- The CPS Exception Documentation form (FIA-140) was to include guidelines on face-to-face contact. Interim policy was distributed January 31, 2004 via the L-Letter process that directs supervisors to ensure the FIA 140 is completed when face to face contact is not achieved within policy guidelines. The guidelines include the need for prior supervisory approval to deviate from expected time constraints.
- An “alert box” will be placed on the FIA Intranet Homepage titled: Child and Family Service Review News (or CFSR News). The alert box will carry reminders weekly of issues that need the attention of field staff. It can be modified based on the findings of data and the CFS Internal Reviews to immediately bring attention to workers and supervisors of areas needing attention.

### **C. Goals**

Because of the critical implications for the safety of children, Item 1 has been given a high priority. The form revisions were completed by December 2003.

### **Expected Improvement**

Michigan will improve its performance on timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment to 77% at the midpoint of the PIP and to 79% by the conclusion of the 2 year PIP as evidenced by the results of the CFSR like review that Michigan is instituting. The level of performance must be sustained over 2 quarters in order for the goal to be considered achieved.

## **SAFETY OUTCOME S2: CHILDREN ARE SAFELY MAINTAINED IN THEIR HOMES WHENEVER POSSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE**

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### ***ITEM 4: RISK OF HARM TO CHILD(REN)***

#### **A. Findings Leading to Nonconformity**

- Item 4 was applicable to all 49 cases that were reviewed and was rated as a strength in 84% of the applicable cases. Eight cases were rated as an area needing improvement.
- Stakeholder interviews and one case review indicated that in some instances FIA had not adequately assessed risk of harm especially in those cases where children were being placed with relatives without adequate home studies and background checks.
- In five cases the reviewers found that the agency did not provide the necessary services to adequately address the risk of harm for children remaining in the home.
- The Statewide Assessment indicated that in case readings of foster care cases, the safety assessment was completed correctly in 76% of the cases.
- Also noted were (1) the family's past history with child welfare not being taken into account in the assessment of risk, often because the information has not been collected or is not available to the caseworker; and (2) lack of follow-up to ensure that parents were participating in and receiving services to reduce risk of harm (1 case).

#### **B. Improvement Plan**

- Michigan CPS and foster care programs use SDM to assess safety and risk to children as well as needs and strengths of families and children. The Assessment of Needs and Strengths is designed to identify the service needs of the parents and children. Case readings in both the CPS and Foster Care program indicate that although the needs may be accurately prioritized, the service plans do not consistently address the top three identified needs.
- To address this inconsistency in CPS, an interim policy bulletin was released 1/04 specifying that the top 3-identified needs must be addressed in the service plan. Additionally, services manual policy will be revised by 5/04 to require that priority be given to the top three needs and strengths identified in the family assessment of all service plans. This revision will allow CPS to mirror the current policy in foster care.
- CANS/SWSS will be implemented to ensure top 3 needs are identified and addressed. Projected date for CANS/SWSS completion is 2/05
- Policy and contact standards will be reinforced to ensure that appropriate services are being delivered and that families are actively participating in those services. Policy and contact standards will be reinforced via web board "What's New" and supervising review in staff meeting. Private Agency staff will receive a letter. Supervisors and County Directors will certify staff trained. Private Agencies will certify standards reinforced.

- The National Council on Crime and Delinquency will complete a revalidation of the initial risk assessment. It is our expectation that upon revalidation, we will have data that will enable Michigan to plan more effectively on how to monitor and design supervisory oversight of the service planning process. Additionally, this data will assist Michigan in the further enhancements to the SACWIS reporting system so that supervisors are able to utilize the data to ensure appropriate adherence to policy and services to families. The revalidation process is described below.
  - The current CPS family risk assessment was last revalidated in 1994 as part of the CPS outcome evaluation. Data was collected for the revalidation on 1,065 sample families substantiated for child abuse/neglect during 1992. Each case was observed for 12 months after the substantiated investigation to examine the incidence and severity of re-abuse or re-neglect. The revalidation findings were employed to improve the performance of the original instrument that was constructed by observing 1,800 families substantiated in 1987 for an 18-month follow-up period.
  - The revised abuse and neglect instruments permitted much sharper distinctions in the risk classification recidivism rates. For instance, none (0%) of the low risk families had a subsequent substantiation during the 12-month follow-up period, compared with 29% of the intensive risk families.
  - To revalidate the risk scales, NCCD developed in conjunction with FIA, a survey research instrument to examine cases that include the factors on the current scales, and additional risk factors that have proven useful in other jurisdictions but are not recorded on the current Michigan risk assessment instruments. Additionally, protective factors, family strengths, and other items of interest were examined as were the service interventions employed by FIA staff.
  - NCCD has completed direct case reviews with the survey instrument on a random sample of 1,500 cases with a preponderance of evidence from 2001. Each case in the sample will be tracked for 18 months to determine which families had subsequent referrals, substantiated cases, placement into foster care and severe injuries. NCCD will determine whether the current scale effectively classifies families, whether items on the scale continue to effectively predict or should be replaced. For the risk reassessment, NCCD will determine whether the current scale is effective in determining if risk has been reduced following service provision and if other variables from the case review are more effective.
- Supervisors will be required to reinforce policy and contact standards with staff to ensure that families are receiving appropriate services and that they are actively participating in those services.
- Explore the development of a pilot with Wayne County 24-hour operations unit to complete background checks in emergency placements for outstate counties. Identify the staffing needs and potential workload increase for Wayne should this strategy be implemented by 6/04. Develop a pilot model by 8/04. Implement a pilot by 9/04 through 12/04. Evaluate and make recommendations based on pilot data 2/05.
  - A CPS and foster care interim policy bulletin will be revised in 5/04 to require that background checks, consisting minimally of a Central Registry and Law Enforcement

Information Network (LEIN) clearance, be completed on all adults in a relative's home prior to or at the time of placement with the exception of weekends and after hours.

- In-service training will be developed by September 2004 and provided to foster care supervisors by October 2004 on accurate completion of the Safety Assessment. Although, the Child Welfare Institute (CWI) trains new staff on the proper use of SDM tools, it has become obvious that follow-up support in the form of regularly scheduled refresher training is needed for staff to assure that they complete the safety assessment accurately. A supervisory module will be designed and available to allow supervisors to train staff at the local office when needed. It is anticipated that a stronger emphasis on adherence to the proper use of the SDM tools will increase the safety of children. The improvement expected from this training will not be measured separately but will be reflected in the overall improvement in Michigan's performance. However, as part of the training component, a pre and post-test will be given from which we can extrapolate increased knowledge.
- It must also be noted that the statewide self assessment reported that the Safety Assessment in 76% of the foster care cases reviewed was not completed accurately. Michigan will focus on determining whether this continues to be the case. NCCD conducted two case reads for the safety assessment in 2003 and noted significant progress. NCCD is currently in the process of conducting another case read and will have it completed by December 2004. . The PIP will be updated by January 2005 to include the findings of this read and to determine our performance and whether additional steps need to occur.

### **C. Goals**

The baseline for this goal will be 84% as determined by the 2002 CFSR.

Improvement will be to achieve 86% at the midpoint of the PIP and 88% by the end of the two year PIP implementation .

The method of measuring improvement will occur utilizing the state conducted CFS Reviews..

The level of performance must be sustained over 2 quarters in order for the goal to be considered achieved.

## **PERMANENCY OUTCOME P1: CHILDREN HAVE PERMANENCY AND STABILITY IN THEIR LIVING SITUATIONS**

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### ***ITEM 6: STABILITY OF FOSTER CARE PLACEMENT***

#### **A. Findings Leading to Nonconformity**

- Item 6 was applicable to all 28 foster care cases reviewed and was rated a strength in 89% of the cases.
- Michigan's percentage on the statewide indicator for this item at the time of the onsite review was 86.2% while the national standard for this item was 86.7%.
- Children are often placed on the basis of what was available rather than on the specific needs of the child.
- Focus groups supported the belief that initial placements did not match the needs of children. They indicated that inadequate information about children's behavior was provided to foster parents at initial placement, inadequate support was given to foster parents to prevent disruption and there were not enough specialized foster homes in Michigan.
- The Final Report cites that the Statewide Assessment identified lack of funding for Wraparound and Assisted Care as having an effect on placement types.

#### **B. Improvement Plan**

- The SCAO Foster Care Review Boards have modified their case reading form and will be detailing the reasons why children are placed 2 times or more in the first 12 months of foster care placement. The FCRB will provide their information to the affected counties for quality review purposes. The FCRB data will not be used in this PIP for purposes of measuring baselines and improvements based on the lack of a centralized data system.
- FIA will refine the PS 830/840 report to accurately reflect the percentage of children in foster care who experience 2 or more placement changes within the first 12 months of removal and utilize this report to compare to the national standard. The report will be provided to each county on a quarterly basis. County manager performance objectives will be modified to include adherence to the federal standard and adherence will be reviewed in their quarterly performance reviews with a corrective action plan being required when below the standard or when no improvement is noted.
- With implementation of SDM in SWSS FAJ (Services Worker Support System, Foster Care, Adoption and Juvenile Justice), the agency will be able to identify specific reasons for replacements and develop policy/resources to address the underlying causative factors. District and county managers can review their office performance on a quarterly basis and identify local issues that contribute to multiple moves. A decrease in replacements and/or multiple moves will be a performance improvement target for managers in their annual performance plans. Each local office will be expected to develop unique, area specific plans to address the issues. The SDM SWSS changes will enable workers to select the reason a child was replaced from a pick list. This will be correlated by SWSS and show percentages per county and district of the specific reasons for child replacement. The expected implementation date is 10/2004.



- Policy revision, training and contracts will be developed to specify the content of face-to-face contacts with parents to include soliciting information about relative resources by 5/2004. In SWSS FAJ, the question will be added: Has the parent identified relatives? Have the relatives been contacted and asked if interested in placement? Has a home study been completed on interested relatives? If a relative placement was not made, pick the reason why. This field in SWSS FAJ will be added by 10/04.
- Public and private child placing agencies will revise their current foster home recruitment strategies and increase the number of available licensed foster homes. An assessment tool will be developed by 7/2004 to evaluate the potential for a foster home to care for a child in a specific needs category. This assessment will be conducted by a licensing worker and entered into the SWSS FAJ provider information screen to assist workers in matching the needs of a child to a foster home when entering care.
- In order to provide caregivers with child specific information quickly after initial placement, policy will be added by 5/2004 to require that CPS complete the Child Assessment of Needs and Strengths (CANS) prior to transfer of the case to foster care. Foster care staff will be required to share the assessment with the caregivers upon receipt from CPS. By having an initial picture of the needs and strengths of a particular child, the caregiver might be able to act quickly in getting some of the child's needs met. Caregivers who know their limits might ask for a difficult child to be moved right away, but this may be better in the long run for the child to be moved to a home where his/her needs have a better chance of being met. An up front assessment of needs will also permit the CPS and Foster Care Workers to make a more appropriate placement immediately.
- When non-emergency foster care replacement situations arise, policy will be revised by to require the worker to hold a Team Decision Meeting (TDM). The TDM will include the caseworker and foster parent, the birth parent, the child and other community members in the placement decision. This will ensure a network of support for the child and adults who care for the child in an effort to avert the disruption by providing support and services to the child and caregiver. The TDM is a component of the Family to Family model and the full statewide implementation will be done incrementally. Facilitators to coordinate and staff the TDMs will need to be hired and trained. The county directors will need to identify community partners to be on the team. To implement this process statewide, an identification of resources and a schedule for roll out is being established. Each county involved will implement the F2F 4-core strategy groups including: TDM, Building Community Partners, Self-Evaluation and Recruitment and Retention.
- A proposal is being developed to create a system of specialized foster homes to care for multiple needs children. FIA hired a contractor to review the current system of children in residential care to determine what needs they have that can be better addressed in a specialized foster home within the community. This will lead to an increase in permanency and stability in foster care placements.
- Collaboration with mental health providers will be established to identify barriers to service and propose and identify solutions to improve foster care stability. A workgroup was established called the Medicaid Redesign Workgroup with members from mental health and FIA who have decision making power. The workgroup's charter is to address the absence of sufficient community based mental health resources for children and families in crisis. The components of funding and service delivery are primary in addressing the needs. To date, the workgroup has identified a charter and is moving forward on designing a more integrated system. The workgroup provided information to the state agency Directors/Executive Management for their review and decisions on alternatives or acceptance of the plan by 4/04

A Determination of Care (DOC) evaluation is completed on each child placed in paid foster care. The worker and foster parent jointly determine specific level of additional foster parent involvement necessary to address a child's particular needs while in care. This determination is designed to provide incentives for the foster parent to provide additional services for the child beyond the reasonable expectations of routine childcare. The Determination of Care (DOC) is ranked at three levels with level 3 requiring the greatest amount of foster parent involvement. District and county managers will be required to target all DOC level 3 cases for a quarterly review to ensure appropriate services are being provided. The review will consist of identification of support services to the foster parent to prevent disruption, number of previous placements for the child, and experience of the foster home. The requirement of and a format for the review was completed in 5/03. Training to staff on DOC criteria will be provided by and under the following categories:

- New worker training by 10/03
- In-service training administered by the local office as needed

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### **C. Goals**

Michigan's performance on the national standards for placement stability will improve by 1.9%, from 84.3% as determined in its 2003 data profile to 86.2% by the end of the 2 year PIP period as evidenced by the data profile in effect at the time of PIP completion.

## **OUTCOME: REUNIFICATION, GUARDIANSHIP, OR PERMANENT PLACEMENT WITH RELATIVES**

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### ***ITEM 8: REUNIFICATION, GUARDIANSHIP, OR PERMANENT PLACEMENT WITH RELATIVES***

#### **A. Findings Leading to Nonconformity**

- Item 8 was applicable to 13 cases and was rated as a strength in 69% of the applicable cases. The statewide data indicator for this item was 52.9% at the time of the on-site review and the national standard was 76.2%.
- Although the state is effective in finding relatives as a permanent placement option for children, Michigan does not have a supported guardianship program that provides financial assistance beyond TANF funds.
- Michigan does not often formalize relative placement through legal guardianship.
- Twenty six % of parents who were surveyed reported that their service needs had not been adequately addressed particularly in the areas of housing and family counseling.
- Michigan has strong family preservation and prevention services and, consequently, children who are removed come from families with serious problems; this has an impact on the rate of reunification.
- There are still waiting lists for substance abuse treatment despite the Binsfeld legislation that requires substance abuse programs to give priority to parents who have had their children removed or were in danger of having children removed.

#### **B. Improvement Plan**

- The SCAO (State Court Administrative Office) has been an active participant in the development of Michigan's improvement plan. In order to address the issue of legal guardianship to formalize relative placements, a state level task force will be established between the judiciary and FIA by 6/2004. It is anticipated this task force will meet monthly. Additionally, FIA will seek a Title IVE waiver by January 23, 2004, in the area of subsidized guardianship.
- The SCAO, Foster Care Review Board and FIA liaisons will convene a workgroup by July, 2004 to modify court rules in the areas of child protective proceedings; post dispositional procedures; child foster care proceedings; Permanency Planning hearings and Termination of Rights hearings.
- With the assistance of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Wayne and Macomb Counties have instituted the Family to Family (F2F) model in a number of communities within the counties. The F2F model creates a strong support system for birth families, places children with foster and relative families who can offer permanency, and links birth and resource families to community networks of support. In these sites, Family Case Reviews (TDMs) are held prior to removal, or within 24 hours of removal, as well as at other critical decision points in the case. Family to Family will become a statewide initiative in February, 2007. Michigan will identify and implement Family to Family in 25 sites by the midpoint of the PIP and add identify and implement Family to Family in another 25 sites by the end of the two year PIP implementation period.

- Work will commence with supervisors and staff to increase compliance with SDM and permanency planning guidelines. Michigan will contract with the NCCD for the next three years to conduct supervisory comparative case readings (NCCD CCR). Round 1 of CCR occurred in calendar year 2003 and will occur once in the calendar years of 2004 and 2005. Supervisors will read three cases per worker per month for each quarter using a specialized case reading form for SDM in CPS and FC. The specialized case reading form includes correct use of the assessments and applications of policy for service provision and safety, permanency and well being. For the CCR, NCCD will sample one case per worker from the cases read by supervisors. The sampling will take place in the 13 largest counties and will include approximately 850 cases. Following the first reading, there will be targeted interventions to include specialized supervisor and worker training covering areas where compliance to policy is unsatisfactory or where concerns exist on the proper use of the tools.. The first reading will provide a baseline measure of supervisor knowledge of SDM policy and of worker compliance with the policy for each item measured. Supervisor and worker compliance will increase in each subsequent reading. The measures established in the CCR will be supplemented when SDM (which will allow reporting on services and policy compliance) is incorporated into SWSS FAJ
- Policy will be developed to require CPS staff to conduct Team Decision Meetings (TDM) prior to removal or within 24 hours of removal to explore relative placement options with parents. TDM policy will be developed by 5/2004 and training will be developed by 06/2004 and implemented by 10/2004.
- Further additions to the PIP will occur relative to the findings from monitoring information within the data warehouse. Review will occur semi-annually with performance expectations addressed for those poor performing counties.(i.e. those counties that fall below the baseline) The means of addressing these areas will be tailored to meet the needs of the local community and cannot be specified. However, they would include enhanced community collaboration, developing new resource providers etc. The first review of data will occur in June 2004.

### **C. Goals**

Using the 2002 CFSR finding of 69% as a baseline, Michigan will improve its performance on addressing the achievement of a child's goal of reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives to 71% at the midpoint of the PIP and to 73% by the conclusion of the 2 year PIP as evidenced by the results of the CFSR like review that Michigan is instituting. The level of performance must be sustained over 2 quarters in order for the goal to be considered achieved.

Michigan's performance on the national standards for the percentage of children reunified within 12 months of entry into foster care will improve by 2.42% from 40.5% as determined in its 2003 data profile to 42.92% by the end on the 2 year PIP period as evidenced by the data profile in effect at the time of PIP completion.

The state CFS Review will enable Michigan to measure progress. During the semi-annual review, case reading will target those children who have not experienced reunification, guardianship or permanent placement with relatives within 15 months to determine if there are commonalties such as lack of appropriate services, lack of housing resources or substance abuse.

Allocation of resources, for instance, the implementation of Family to Family, will be considered given the findings from the case read.

## **PERMANENCY P2: CONTINUITY OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS IS PRESERVED FOR CHILDREN**

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### ***ITEM 12: PLACEMENT WITH SIBLINGS***

#### **A. Findings Leading to Nonconformity**

- Nineteen of the 28 foster care cases involved a child with siblings in care, and 84% of these cases were rated as a strength.
- Although siblings are often placed together, lack of placement resources were a barrier to keeping siblings together.
- Although OCAL (Office of Children and Adult Licensing) has the capacity to grant variances in foster home licensure to accommodate sibling groups, this does not happen routinely.

#### **B. Improvement Plan**

- Recognizing that adequate placement resources are critical to the placement of siblings together, Michigan public and private Child Placing Agencies (CPAs) will develop strategies to target the recruitment of foster homes willing to accept sibling groups by 6/04. The aggregate number of foster homes, including public and private, will be reported on a quarterly basis beginning in 6/2004 to measure increase or decrease in foster homes. The data will come from OCAL automated reporting and from listings of available homes that are kept updated in county offices. The information will be reported to the local office director who will review this report and develop and implement recruitment strategies.
- FIA and OCAL will meet to discuss and promote the use of variances to keep siblings in the same home by 05/04. A mechanism will be developed by 10/2004 to review denials of variances. If variances are granted more frequently, it will result in more siblings being placed together in the same home. This initiative was delayed due to the changes in management at DCIS (now OCAL) and the transfer of this unit to FIA.
- In December 2003, a Governor's executive order was issued that moved the responsibility for foster home licensing into the FIA. By April of 2004, discussion will occur with managers who are hired into that Office regarding licensing needs to facilitate the increase in licensed homes. It is our expectation that the integration of licensing and services will increase the state's ability to receive short-term variances to facilitate sibling placement as well as facilitate the expeditious licensing of family homes, if appropriate. Data on improvements will be measured by SWSS reports which are to begin in 10/04.
- Since placement stability is greater for children placed with relatives, public and private CPAs will develop strategies to increase relative placements for sibling groups. The committee will convene by 6/2004 to develop the strategies and implementation of the strategies will be made by 9/2004.

- To ensure greater success of placing larger sibling groups together, strategies will be developed to increase the number of foster family group homes that can provide care for sibling groups of 5 and 6 children. These strategies will include methods of providing additional services and financial support to families licensed for sibling groups of 5 to 6 children.
- With implementation of SDM in SWSS FAJ, a pick list will be available to workers to identify specific reasons why sibling splits occur. This feature will be available by 10/2004. All sibling splits require second line supervisory approval. Sibling splits will be reviewed at this level quarterly and resources to address the issue will be explored on a case by case basis. With SDM implementation into SWSS FAJ, all splits will be identified as well as reasons for the splits. This data source would provide better information to identify action to affect change. We continue to anticipate a 2004 implementation date.

### **C. Goals**

Using the 2002 CFSR finding of 84% as a baseline, Michigan will improve its performance on placing siblings together to 86% at the midpoint of the PIP and to 88% by the conclusion of the 2 year PIP as evidenced by the results of the CFSR like review that Michigan is instituting. The level of performance must be sustained over 2 quarters in order for the goal to be considered achieved.

**PERMANENCY OUTCOME 2: CONTINUITY OF FAMILY  
RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS IS PRESERVED  
FOR CHILDREN.**

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***ITEM 13: VISITING WITH PARENTS AND SIBLINGS IN FOSTER CARE***

**A. Findings Leading to Nonconformity**

- Item 13 was applicable to 22 of the 28 foster care cases read and was thus rated as a strength in 68% of the cases.
- In 32% of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to facilitate visits that are in conflict with State policy and the Juvenile Code.
- There was a failure to conduct a diligent search for a father.
- In six cases there were no visitation plans for the child with the parents and/or siblings.

**B. Improvement Plan**

- Recognizing that staffs frequently fail to pursue identification of absent parents, particularly fathers, the SCAO, in collaboration with FIA, have developed an Absent Parent Protocol (APP). Training on the protocol will be provided to public and private child welfare staff and court staff by 10/2004 to ensure that diligent efforts are made to identify, locate and engage absent parents.
- Policy will be revised to include the best practices contained in the Absent Parent protocol will be revised and implemented by 10/2004 .
- SWSS FAJ will be expanded by 10/2004 to allow the Family Assessment of Needs and Strengths (FANS) to address absent parents by identifying, locating and engaging them. The section in the Initial Service Plan (ISP) will continue to address the absent parent in the reasonable efforts section.
- To enhance monitoring of parenting time and sibling visit plans, performance objectives for managers and supervisors will be modified by 4/2004 to include adherence to policy. The Agency standard for performance reviews under Performance Architect varies but a review of progress toward goals is expected at least once per quarter. Local office managers will be expected to ensure that for services supervisors, the issue of monitoring parenting time and sibling visits is addressed quarterly.
- With respect to the Purchase of Services (POS) Monitoring workers, the expectation will be that they monitor parenting time for their cases and will address any non-compliance to policy with the private agency. The POS Monitoring workers will review quarterly reports to ensure adequate parenting time occurs. This component will be tracked through case readings.
- FIA traditionally has not required foster parents to provide transportation for parenting time and sibling visits, although there are foster parents who do provide this service for children in their care. Many private child-placing agencies require their foster parents to provide transportation. FIA will include the expectation that foster parents will provide transportation for parenting time and sibling visits in their recruitment and training by 1/2004. Current policy allows for mileage reimbursement to foster parents. Because this



is an expectation, there will be exceptions granted on a case-by-case basis. Monitoring of any negative impact of this modification will be assessed through a survey instrument at the conclusion of one year of policy implementation (January 05) and through individual follow up with foster families who quit service. A modified “exit interview document” will be designed to be sent to foster families in both the public and private sector asking for their input on what caused them to quit fostering.

The survey will be designed by September 2004, piloted by December 2004 and ready for routine use by January 2005.

- Supervisors review case plans and will target cases where visitation plans do not allow for quality visitation or where visitation plans do not appear to be carried out. A training module for visitation will be developed by CWI by 10/2004 and available to supervisors by 10/2004 to use at staff meetings with workers.

The statewide implementation of Family to Family is also anticipated to be a positive factor in increasing parenting time and visits with siblings.

### **C. Goals**

Using the 2002 CFSR finding of 68% as a baseline, Michigan will improve its performance on facilitating visitation between children in foster care with parents and other siblings in foster care to 70% at the midpoint of the PIP and to 72% by the conclusion of the 2 year PIP as evidenced by the results of the CFSR like review that Michigan is instituting. The level of performance must be sustained over 2 quarters in order for the goal to be considered achieved.

## **OUTCOME: P2: THE CONTINUITY OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS IS PRESERVED FOR CHILDREN**

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### ***ITEM 15: RELATIVE PLACEMENT***

#### **A. Findings Leading to Nonconformity**

- Item 15 was applicable to all 28 foster care cases and was rated as a strength in 82% of the cases.
- Five cases were found to be an area needing improvement because the agency had failed to conduct a thorough search or evaluation of relatives as potential placement resources or relatives had requested to be considered for placement and the agency failed to follow up.
- Some stakeholders were concerned that relatives were not assessed prior to a child's placement in their care.
- Michigan places a large number of children with relatives but does not provide financial support beyond TANF and has no subsidized guardianship program. Frequently relative disruptions are caused because of financial issues for the relative caregiver.

#### **B. Improvement Plan**

- In order to assure the safety of children, CPS/FC policy will be revised by 6/2004 to require that background checks for relatives be completed prior to or at the time of placement. At minimum, the background check will include a Central Registry clearance and a Law Enforcement Information Network (LEIN) clearance, with the exception for after hour removals.
- FIA had discussions with the judiciary in 10/2003 to review the possibility of using legal guardianship and potential funding as an option for children placed with relatives. As a result, the initial application for a guardianship waiver was submitted in 2/04.
- In order to help with the financial burdens of caring for relative children, policy will be revised by 6/2004 to insure that all relatives are given information regarding foster home licensing requirements and encouraged to apply for licensure. Relatives will also be given information on other FIA financial and supportive resources in the form of a standard information sheet developed by 7/2004. The current "Relative/Fictive Kin Home Study" form (FIA-197) will be revised by 7/2004 to address the following issues: 1) Is the caregiver interested in becoming licensed 2) List the date when registration information was provided to the caregiver for licensing. 3) Was the information sheet (to be developed) given to the relative? Supervisory case reading will monitor this practice. Eventually, SWSS FAJ will have the information when SDM is implemented in the program.
- A workgroup will be convened with Office OCAL to work toward establishing a priority licensing policy for relative placement. OCAL will develop guidelines for licensure of relatives and develop codes to designate relatives so that they may be tracked for timeliness of licensure. This tracking number will indicate the date that the request was submitted to OCAL. This process will be completed by 9/04.

### **C. Goals**

Using the 2002 CFSR finding of 82% as a baseline, Michigan will improve its performance on identifying, evaluating and supporting relative care to 84% at the midpoint of the PIP and to 86% by the conclusion of the 2 year PIP as evidenced by the results of the CFSR like review that Michigan is instituting. The level of performance must be sustained over 2 quarters in order for the goal to be considered achieved.

## **OUTCOME P2: THE CONTINUITY OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS IS PRESERVED FOR CHILDREN**

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### ***ITEM 16: RELATIONSHIP OF CHILD IN CARE WITH PARENTS***

#### **A. Findings Leading to Nonconformity**

- Item 16 was applicable to 16 of the 28 foster care cases and was rated as a strength in 81% of the cases.
- In the three cases identified as an area needing improvement, the reviewers felt that the agency had not promoted visitation or services to strengthen the parent-child relationship.
- Reviewers cited that visitation/contacts were not flexible in meeting the scheduling needs and dynamics of the family, or the environment where visits occurred were not conducive to promote a supportive bond between the parent and child.
- Particular concern was expressed over the lack of consistent efforts to locate and involve fathers.

#### **B. Improvement Plan**

- The lack of a diligent search and involvement of absent parents, particularly fathers, was noted in several items in the Final Report. As indicated in Item 13, an Absent Parent Protocol (APP) has been developed and will be implemented in the field.
- Training will be provided to address Service Manual Item 722.8c (Parenting time and sibling visitation). Training will be developed by 10/03 to reflect and emphasize the Absent Parent Protocol to strengthen the parent/child relationship. 100% of staff will be trained by 10/04
- Modify performance objectives for managers and supervisors by 10/04 to:
  - A. Develop a plan to ensure flexible scheduling and suitable environments for parenting time and sibling visits while preserving the safety and well-being of the child.
  - B. Adhere to minimum policy required contacts.
  - C. Identify barriers to visitation when minimal standards are not met through tracking in SWSS /FAJ.

Addressing identified barriers will result in an increased number of child/parent visits and contacts.

- Incorporate parenting time and sibling visitation into SWSS FAJ by 10/04 to accurately monitor the levels of each. Supervisors will review compliance on a quarterly basis and direct workers to conduct the minimal required number of visits as per policy when there is noncompliance with policy.
- Distribute a recently published handbook to parents called “A Parent’s Guide to Child Protective Processes. A Handbook for parents with children in Foster Care.” This handbook will be made available for parents with children in foster care. (FIA-PUB 31)
- The overall implementation of the Performance Improvement Plan will support better involvement of parents in assessing needs, services and family resources, improve policy compliance with parenting time and sibling visitation, and increase timely efforts made toward reunification.
- In Foster Parent pre-licensing meetings and in licensing home studies, the requirement that the foster parent be willing to implement strategies of F2F with respect to the following:

- Availability for visits at alternate times
- Willingness /eagerness to visit in the foster care providers home
- Involvement of the foster care provider during the visit if the visit occurs outside of the home such as in an agency office.
- Integrating the foster parent's skills and willingness to assist the parent in learning new parenting skills

### **C. Goals**

Using the 2002 CFSR finding of 81% as a baseline, Michigan will improve its performance on promoting parental involvement with their child while in foster care to 83% at the midpoint of the PIP and to 85% by the conclusion of the 2 year PIP as evidenced by the results of the CFSR like review that Michigan is instituting. The level of performance must be sustained over 2 quarters in order for the goal to be considered achieved

## **WELL BEING OUTCOME WB1: FAMILIES HAVE ENHANCED CAPACITY TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S NEEDS**

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### ***ITEM 17: NEEDS AND SERVICES OF CHILD, PARENTS, FOSTER PARENTS***

#### **A. Findings Leading to Nonconformity**

- Item 17 was applicable in all 49 cases and was rated as strengths in 73% of the cases.
- In the 13 cases rated as an area needing improvement, the following concerns were noted:
- Children's needs were not assessed and/or services to address needs were not provided.
- Parent or sibling's needs were not assessed and/or services to address needs were not provided.
- Services identified were not adequate to meet the needs of the parents and/or children.
- Foster parent's needs were not assessed and/or services to address needs were not provided.
- Fathers were not contacted by agency to determine needs.
- Concerns were expressed by some stakeholders that SDM was not being used appropriately.

#### **B. Improvement Plan**

- Incorporate SDM for foster care into SWSS FAJ by 10/04 to increase the identification of family and child needs and the delivery of services to address identified needs. Incorporation of SDM into SWSS FAJ will increase supervisory and program manager monitoring and compliance with policy.
- CPS is currently developing policy and revising the assessment tools to assist in the prioritization of the child and family primary strengths/needs and identifying services to address those needs. This should be completed by 10/04. The CPS Peer Review team will monitor proper use.
- Revision of treatment plans by 10/04 to include assessing specific needs of foster parents, and improved monitoring of the use of SDM forms will occur to ensure that needs and strengths are being accurately assessed and that services are being provided to address the priority needs.
- Focus groups (foster parents/relative caregivers) will be conducted by 6/05 for feedback on provided services, gaps in services, and policy changes to assure that needs are being met or addressed.
- In order to increase effective monitoring by supervisors on the use of SDM by their staff, training needs will be identified based on results of the NCCD CCR by the month following each individual county's review. NCCD will provide training to supervisors and staff within the same time frame.
- To improve the current system of providing substance abuse services to clients involved in the child welfare system, an Interagency Committee with representatives from FIA, DCH, SCAO, private agencies and others met in May of 1999.
  - A state team consisting of representatives from the original committee now works throughout the State to address the needs identified by the Interagency Committee. The team provides technical assistance to counties and tribes to encourage communication and collaboration among substance abuse treatment providers and child welfare, and training and resources to facilitate improvement of the provision of substance abuse

services to child welfare clients. Michigan's state team is also working to enhance awareness of existing funding and to identify alternative funding options.

- Several counties in Michigan have developed protocols or written agreements for the purpose of improving substance abuse services to child welfare clients. Other counties are in various stages of planning and developing a Substance Abuse Child Welfare collaboration project, including the development of family drug courts in a few Michigan counties.
- Michigan applied for and was awarded technical assistance from The National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare in August 2003. NCSACW will work with Michigan's state team to develop a scope of work for an in-depth TA that will include working with the substance abuse, child welfare, court systems and local tribes to increase collaboration and strategic plans for working together. A kick-off meeting occurred September 11 and 12, 2003. A work plan was devised to guide the technical assistance activities until July 2004.
- Provide updated resource information to caregivers to include foster parent/caregiver support group information Complete and distribute the Foster Parent Handbook

### **C. Goals**

Using the 2002 CFSR finding of 73% as a baseline, Michigan will improve its performance in assessing needs of families and caregivers and matching services to those needs to 75% at the midpoint of the PIP and to 77% by the conclusion of the 2 year PIP as evidenced by the results of the CFSR like review that Michigan is instituting. The level of performance must be sustained over 2 quarters in order for the goal to be considered achieved

## **OUTCOME: WELL BEING 1: FAMILIES HAVE ENHANCED CAPACITY TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S NEEDS.**

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### ***ITEM 18: CHILD AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN CASE PLANNING***

#### **A. Findings Leading to Nonconformity**

- Item 18 was applicable in 47 of the 49 cases reviewed and was rated as a strength in 70% of the applicable cases.
- In most of the 14 cases rated as an area needing improvement, the general finding was that case plans were prepared by the caseworkers and presented to parents for signature without involving the parents in the case planning process.
- Children were not always engaged in the case planning process.
- Fathers were not engaged in the case planning process even when their whereabouts were known.
- Diligent efforts were not made to find an absent father.
- There were concerns that treatment plans were “generic” and not specific to the unique needs of the families.

#### **B. Improvement Plan**

- Implementation of the Absent Parent Protocol should improve performance of staff in the diligent search for absent parents. The APP will mandate that courts take leadership to insure that efforts to find and involve absent parents are given appropriate attention at the earliest stages of a child protection case. As the protocol is implemented, the direct result anticipated should improve inclusion of fathers in the case planning process.
- Policy will be revised by 4/2004 to require face-to-face contact by the worker during the first month following out of home placement to discuss family and child assessment of needs and service provision to resolve the identified needs. This requirement will focus staff on the purpose of face-to-face contacts, assure parent and child involvement in the development of the treatment plan and begin the process to engage the parent.
- A supervisory training module on the “Magnificent Seven” is being developed in collaboration with the University of Michigan and Michigan State University for use with child welfare supervisors. This training package is being presented to FIA managers on 1/8/04 for review and discussion. Implementation and roll out planning will also be discussed then. The package is being developed to train supervisors in seven areas that will provide skill improvement when supervising child welfare, with child and family involvement in case planning being one of the seven. Ways to measure the impact of the training will also be discussed at that time and our PIP updates will include additional details on this.
- The statewide implementation of F2F will assist in the child and family involvement in case planning based on the design of and adherence to the model.
- Conduct a review through the NCCD case readings to determine if adherence to policy improves over the timeframe of 7/03 through 12/05.
- The results of the NCCD case reads in 7/03 and 6/04 will be used as a basis to identify best practices relative to engagement of children and families in case planning to identify and develop a best practice document to share in the field.



## **C. Goals**

Using the 2002 CFSR finding of 70% as a baseline, Michigan will improve its performance on involving children and families in case planning to 72% at the midpoint of the PIP and to 74% by the conclusion of the 2 year PIP as evidenced by the results of the CFSR like review that Michigan is instituting. The level of performance must be sustained over 2 quarters in order for the goal to be considered achieved.

## **OUTCOME P2: THE CONTINUITY OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS IS PRESERVED FOR CHILDREN**

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### ***ITEM 19: WORKER VISITS WITH CHILD***

#### **A. Findings Leading to Nonconformity**

- Item 19 was applicable in all 49 cases and was rated as a strength in 80% of the cases.
- In the 10 cases rated as an area needing improvement, the reviewers determined that the frequency and/or quality of caseworker visits with children were not sufficient.
- In some cases, telephone contacts were made in lieu of face-to-face contacts.
- High caseworker turnover was cited as a primary reason for failure to make regular visits with children.

#### **B. Improvement Plan**

- Policy will be revised by 4/2004 to require face-to-face contact by the worker during the first month following out of home placement to discuss family and child assessment of needs and service provision to resolve the identified needs. This requirement will focus staff on the purpose of face-to-face contacts, assure parent and child involvement in the development of the treatment plan and begin the process to engage the parent
- In order to address the issue of quality of visits with children, policy on worker visit expectations will be revised for children in CPS and FC by 10/2004. Policy will clarify and establish activities to be completed during visits to develop a relationship with the child to facilitate the assessment of the child's ongoing needs and strengths using the SDM CANS.
- SWSS FAJ implementation will have a section to record contacts with the child, parent and provider, along with a brief narrative on the contact. SWSS CPS, when completed, will have the same potential. FIA will be able to determine the extent to which contact standards are met using the automated system. Sampling of cases may allow a detailed look at the content of the contacts before that time and will occur via the CFS Internal Reviews.
- Training will incorporate the revised SDM CANS, which includes development stages of children by 10/04.
- A workgroup will be established to revise the SDM CANS to include the developmental stages of children by 6/04. The revision will be complete by 10/04
- A workgroup will be convened to review and develop alternatives for foster care worker contacts that will assure the safety of children
- These above strategies are designed to make changes in practice. However, they are primarily oriented toward policy clarification and strengthening. As a result, Michigan will be requesting technical assistance for the NRC for Family Centered Practice for a review of our policies and practices with the goal of streamlining policy; highlighting and supporting family centered practice and consistency in practice across the continuum of child welfare.
- A request for additional staff as indicated in most recent workload study to meet standards will be made by 7/2004

#### **C. Goals**

Using the 2002 CFSR finding of 80% as a baseline, Michigan will improve its performance on worker visitation with children to 82% at the midpoint of the PIP and to 84% by the conclusion

of the 2 year PIP as evidenced by the results of the CFSR like review that Michigan is instituting. The level of performance must be sustained over 2 quarters in order for the goal to be considered achieved

## **OUTCOME: WELL BEING 1: FAMILIES HAVE AN ENHANCED CAPACITY TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S NEEDS**

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### ***ITEM 20: WORKER VISITS WITH PARENT(S)***

#### **A. Findings Leading to Nonconformity**

- Item 20 was applicable in 40 of the 49 cases and was rated as a strength in 72.5% of the applicable cases.
- The frequency and/or quality of caseworker visits with parents were not sufficient to promote the safety and well being of the child or attainment of case goals.
- Lack of contact with fathers was minimal even when they had been caretakers or maintained contact with the children.

#### **B. Improvement Plan**

- The Absent Parent Protocol will mandate that courts take leadership to insure that efforts to identify, locate and involve absent parents are given appropriate attention at the earliest stages of a child protection case and quarterly as the case progresses in the system. As the protocol is implemented, the direct result anticipated should improve the inclusion of fathers in the case planning process. Additionally, worker training will be enhanced to increase workers' skills in acknowledging and engaging the non-custodial parent (father) in the case planning process. The Absent Parent Protocol includes strategies for both CPS cases and Foster Care cases.
- Worker visits with parents will be tracked when SDM is implemented in SWSS FAJ. SWSS FAJ can track whether fathers (or the absent parent) is identified and are contacted. Manager and supervisor performance objectives will be modified to adhere to contact standards for all parents named in the case plan through revision of supervisory case reading forms for CPS and FC by 10/2004.
- The FC and CPS policy offices convened in 12/2003 to review contact standards and appropriate completion of the FANS. Policy will be revised by 10/2004 that will assist in promoting participation and involvement of all family members. This implementation strategy will require the Child Welfare Institute to train family focused methods for new and experienced workers.
- Strengthen local office management accountability for ensuring appropriate worker contact with parents, including the absent parent, to promote safety and well-being of the child or to promote the attainment of case goals. The local office management structure will have performance objectives modified to focus on the outcomes consistent with the CFSR process. By including the CFSR objectives in their performance expectations, their awareness will be heightened to the necessity to assure proper worker adherence to policy. These modifications in performance expectations will be integrated into both the PIP and field operations so they become standardized working protocols.
- Technical assistance will be requested from the NRC for Family Centered Practice to determine strategies that can be utilized to engage the uninvolved but not absent parent. For

instance, blended families or issues of geographic distance. The purpose of the technical assistance would be to determine if there are policies, practices or strategies that can be utilized to enhance the involvement of both parents.

- Interview parents, children and workers with the goal of identifying barriers that negatively impact upon quality of visits

### **C. Goals**

Using the 2002 CFSR finding of 72.5% as a baseline, Michigan will improve its performance on worker visitation with parents to 74.5% at the midpoint of the PIP and to 76.5% by the conclusion of the 2 year PIP as evidenced by the results of the CFSR like review that Michigan is instituting. The level of performance must be sustained over 2 quarters in order for the goal to be considered achieved

## **WELL BEING OUTCOME WB2: CHILDREN RECEIVE APPROPRIATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

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### ***ITEM 21: EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN***

#### **A. Findings Leading to Nonconformity**

- Item 21 was applicable in 33 of the 49 cases reviewed and was rated as a strength in 79 % of the applicable cases.
- Educational assessments had not been completed to identify educational needs or needs had been identified and services were not provided to address the identified needs in 7 of 29 cases.
- Focus groups identified lack of tutoring and special education services for children in foster care as a common problem.
- Fifty-five percent of the foster parents responding to the foster parent survey, in preparation for the statewide assessment, indicated that caseworkers were helpful in linking the child with educational services.

#### **B. Improvement Plan**

- The Children's Action Network (CAN) is being implemented in 22 failing schools in the state. CAN is a network of state agencies convened by Governor Jennifer M. Granholm to work collaboratively to better support and serve Michigan's children. The CAN brings together every state agency that in some way touches the lives of Michigan's children from the Department of Education and the FIA to the Departments of Corrections and Community Health – to work across state department boundaries to support children. The Network meets regularly to share information and ideas in order to improve the services and delivery of those services that the State of Michigan provides to its children. Results from the Michigan CAN project will be utilized to determine if targeted worker involvement in schools has an impact. Data will be collected as part of the CAN program and Michigan staff will ensure that the needs for data for the PIP are included.
- SDM Child Assessment of Needs and Strengths was modified in 12/2003 to assure a more targeted educational assessment, developmental stages and cognitive growth. SDM CANS definitions and forms have been redesigned and structured to capture specific ages and stages of development (0-3, 4-9, 10-13 and 14 and over). The form will be used by both FC and CPS. The changes are in the pilot and review stages currently and results will be reported.
- A decision will be made whether to contract for training or to design in house training for workers and foster parents by 6/2004 to help them in the assessment of educational needs and obtainment of the identified services. It is critical to include foster parents as part of the professional team when assessing the educational needs of the child and assuring that services are being provided. As of February 2004, FIA is in the planning stages of identifying what are the necessary components to be included in such a tool and or training.
- The inclusion of Family to Family principles; specifically the Team Decision Making meetings will, by design, allow for continuation in the same school for a child who may need out-of-home placement. The decision about moving a child or keeping a child in his/her

current school can be evaluated by all parties simultaneously with the consequences of such a move in the context of the TDM meeting. The TDM meetings would be convened prior to the removal, replacement, reunification, permanency planning or any other major decision in the life of the case. The educational partners, foster family caretakers, parents and workers are present at these meetings. Depending on the age of the child, he/she may also take part in this decision. The specific needs, strengths and behaviors of the child will help determine the course of action regarding the child's education needs and supports. These meetings will also help to ensure the most appropriate placements for the children when they initially enter care.

- An expanded educational narrative that addresses how the child is doing in school and what educational supports are in place for identified educational needs will be part of the CANS for both CPS and FC by 10/04.

### **C. Goals**

Using the 2002 CFSR finding of 79% as a baseline, Michigan will improve its performance on assessing and addressing children's educational needs to 81% at the midpoint of the PIP and to 83% by the conclusion of the 2 year PIP as evidenced by the results of the CFSR like review that Michigan is instituting. The level of performance must be sustained over 2 quarters in order for the goal to be considered achieved.

## **WELL BEING OUTCOME WB3: CHILDREN RECEIVE ADEQUATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS**

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### ***ITEM 23: MENTAL HEALTH OF THE CHILD***

#### **A. Findings Leading to Nonconformity**

- Item 23 was applicable in 26 of the 49 cases reviewed and was rated as a strength in 81% of the applicable cases.
- Of the five cases rated as an area needing improvement, there were two cases where the child's mental health needs or behavioral issues were not addressed, and three cases where an identified service was not provided.
- Stakeholders reported that mental health services can be difficult to access and that recent changes in mental health provisions under Medicaid have created confusion about where to obtain services.
- Community mental health services are difficult to obtain.
- Psychiatric services are hard to find.
- Concerns were noted about the quality of mental health service providers.

#### **B. Improvement Plan**

- The Public/Private Partnership group has developed a modified CAFAS (Child and Adolescent Functioning and Assessment Scale) with the assistance of its' creator, Kay Hodges, that can be utilized to assist workers and care providers in the proper assessment of child needs. The draft modifications were completed in 12/03 and the tool is out for review in January 04. An action plan will be determined by the group and the PIP will be updated with details as they are formulated a pilot project in Juvenile Justice began 3/04 in Wayne County using modified tools.
- The Children's Action Network described in Item 21 will assist in assessing, and providing referrals and services for children with mental health needs.
- Quality of service and program evaluation this action step goes to the immediacy and availability of mental health services. The Medicaid Redesign Group continues to work on the development of an overarching plan that includes identifying foster care and CPS children and families as a priority population. The committee has developed a set of recommendations that are under consideration by state level executive management. Recommendations on how the state will proceed with the recommendations are anticipated early March of 2004. The committee recognizes the importance of the delivery of mental health services to at risk families in the child welfare system. This collaborative effort will enhance what currently available while moving forward on the overall systemic reform in Michigan.
- SDM Child Assessment of Needs and Strengths will be modified to assure appropriate identification of mental health needs and used by CPS as well as FC. A link will be built into SWSS FAJ which identifies needs and services provided by 09/2005. Targeted case readings will also ensure that this is being done on a case by case basis



- Training will be provided to staff following the revision of the CANS by 10/2004. Private agency partners are required to attend all FIA CWI training. This update would also be included in contract language for private agencies and FIA policy.

### **C. Goals**

Using the 2002 CFSR finding of 81% as a baseline, Michigan will improve its performance on addressing mental health needs of children to 83% at the midpoint of the PIP and to 85% by the conclusion of the 2 year PIP as evidenced by the results of the CFSR like review that Michigan is instituting. The level of performance must be sustained over 2 quarters in order for the goal to be considered achieved.

## **OUTCOME: SYSTEMIC FACTOR 2**

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### ***ITEM 25: PROVIDES A PROCESS THAT ENSURES THAT EACH CHILD HAS A WRITTEN CASE PLAN TO BE DEVELOPED JOINTLY WITH THE CHILD'S PARENT (S) THAT INCLUDES THE REQUIRED PROVISIONS***

#### **A. Findings Leading to Nonconformity**

- Case plans are not being consistently developed jointly with children and parents contrary to FIA policy requiring joint case plan development. Frequently, case plans are not signed by parents.
- Fathers are not being engaged in treatment planning.
- Often case plans are “generic” and do not address the individualized needs of a family.

#### **B. Improvement Plan**

- Implement the Absent Parent Protocol, which has been discussed previously.
- Amend policy to require contacts with the non-custodial parent to assure the involvement of both parents in the case plan.
- Increased supervisory monitoring of case plan development to assure involvement of parents and children. If the parent(s) are not available or are not participating, diligent efforts to engage them must be documented in the case record.
- Updated Service Plans (USPs) will be amended to include a place for parent's comments on their progress in achieving mutually agreed upon goals.

#### **C. Goals**

Parent and child involvement in the development of treatment plans will increase significantly with the implementation of the above action steps. Additionally, the entire Program Improvement Plan focuses on increasing involvement with parents, children, and foster parents to assure accurate assessment of needs and strengths and appropriate service delivery based on the identified needs. With improved frequency and quality of face-to-face contacts, case plan development should become more meaningful and should result in more positive outcomes for children and families.

## **OUTCOME: SYSTEMIC FACTOR 2: CASE REVIEW SYSTEM**

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***ITEM 27: PROVIDES A PROCESS THAT ENSURES THAT EACH CHILD IN FOSTER CARE UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE STATE HAS A PERMANENCY HEARING IN A QUALIFIED COURT OR ADMINISTRATIVE BODY NO LATER THAN 12 MONTHS FROM THE DATE THE CHILD ENTERED FOSTER CARE AND NO LESS FREQUENTLY THAN EVERY 12 MONTHS THEREAFTER***

### **A. Findings Leading to Nonconformity**

- Statewide assessment found that 59% of cases had a PPH in accordance with the 12-month timeframe established by state statute.
- Stakeholders expressed the concern that although PPH may be held on time; they often do not focus on permanency issues.

### **B. Improvement Plan**

- In Wayne County, where FIA is represented by the Attorney General's office, Permanency-Planning hearings (PPH) will be scheduled and held in accordance with the Juvenile Code requirements. At the Dispositional Review hearing prior to the PPH, the foster care worker will advise the court that the the next hearing will be a PPH. The worker will document this information in the case record file. Supervisors will track this information by conducting quarterly case readings. Should the PPH not take place as scheduled, notification will be made to FIA from the Attorney General's office via a written report.
- The SCAO will issue an administrative order to assure more compliance with the statutory requirements for permanency planning hearings. Compliance will be tracked through the Court Report Card that is scheduled to roll out in 03/05.
- The supervising agency will be responsible for advising the court of the requirement for the permanency planning review hearing at the conclusion of the review hearing preceding the PPH.
- Michigan will request and utilize the NRC on Legal and Judicial issues as a consultant to aid us in determining where state policies and procedures may be streamlined to facilitate an improvements. Such technical assistance could include issues such as the adequacy of documents submitted to court preparedness for the hearing process of witnesses, the inclusion of appropriate witnesses etc.
- Michigan will seek the support and involvement of the Children's Justice Task Force pursuant to CAPTA to engage in a thoughtful process on how improvements can occur. The goal of this would be to facilitate a better understanding of the issues confronting FIA and the courts and to collectively seek recommendations for improvement.

### **C. Goals**

Michigan's goal is to address systemic barriers that impede effective interface of the child welfare and legal system resulting in an increase in the focus and timeliness of permanency hearings being held for children in foster care. The above actions should increase understanding on permanency planning within the child welfare community and its judicial partners. The strategies will enable a shared responsibility to ensure that permanency is addressed on a timely basis.

***ITEM 29: PROVIDES A PROCESS FOR FOSTER PARENTS, PREADOPTIVE PARENTS, AND RELATIVE CAREGIVERS OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE TO BE NOTIFIED OF, AND HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE HEARD IN ANY REVIEW OR HEARING HELD WITH RESPECT TO THE CHILD***

**A. Findings Leading to Nonconformity**

- There is inconsistent notification of foster parents, pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers for review hearings due in part to a lack of clarity regarding the responsibilities and process for notifying those parties.
- Stakeholders suggested that foster parents do not attend hearings because they are not encouraged to do so by their caseworkers.
- When foster parents do attend court hearings, some courts do not allow them to participate.
- There is general agreement that foster parents are not clear about their rights or expectations regarding participation in review and permanency hearings.

**B. Improvement Plan**

- Supervising agencies will generate a Notice of Court Hearing to caregivers, which includes a statement of their rights and expectations regarding participation in permanency planning and dispositional reviews, notice of next court hearing and name/address/phone number of child's attorney. For FIA, this will require a revision of the automated letter generated when the legal section of SWSS is updated.
- SCAO will explore the possibility of developing a Court Rule that would encourage courts to provide foster parents, pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers input at review and Permanency Planning Hearings.

**. C. Goals**

The above actions should assure that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers are notified of court hearings by alleviating the confusion as to whom is responsible for notifying the caregivers. Additionally, foster parents, pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers will be more involved in the child's permanency by attending hearings and offering information to the Court about the child.

An additional goal is improvement system wide through the utilization of the Children's Justice Task Force and the NRC Technical Assistance as cited in Item 27 and 28. The systemic factors need to be addressed as a holistic package designed to bring all those who are involved with the child together to have input into the best outcomes. Notice to Foster and adoptive parents and relative caregivers is one component. However, Michigan believes it needs to move further down the continuum to insure inclusiveness of all those partners who have a stake in the welfare of the child and family.